

VZCZCXYZ0001  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMO #2323/01 2231238  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 101238Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9393  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4410  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0544  
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR PRIORITY 0299  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 002323

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/07/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [RS](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: SCO SUMMIT DEMARCHE DELIVERED: GOR ARGUES SCO NOT  
READY FOR IRANIAN MEMBERSHIP

REF: STATE 82513

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Alice G. Wells  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On August 7 we delivered reftel demarche to MFA Third Secretary Maksim Chernyshov, who told us the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) would not accept any new members at the August 28 summit in Dushanbe because no mechanism to do so exists. Possible Iranian membership enjoyed the open support of Tajikistan only, and will not be considered during the Dushanbe summit. Iran's participation at Dushanbe will be limited. Chernyshov told us the SCO will not mention the Manas Air Base at all during the summit, nor will it criticize the West. During the summit, SCO member states will sign a document that allows outside countries to become dialogue partners and cooperate in SCO projects, which will provide Iran greater access to SCO activities. The SCO will not offer any new plans for Afghanistan at Dushanbe, but will instead urge the world community to assist in reconstruction efforts there. End Summary.

-----  
SCO Not Ready For New Members  
-----

12. (C) On August 7 MFA Third Secretary Maksim Chernyshov told us the SCO has no mechanism for accepting new members, and so no new states would join the organization during the August 28 Dushanbe summit. He said, however, that at the summit the SCO heads of state would set up an experts working group that would "explore the possibility of accepting new members" into the organization in the future. He stressed, however, that the SCO operates by consensus, and no consensus existed regarding the future membership of any state. "Only Tajikistan has openly supported Iran's aspirations to join the SCO," he said.

13. (C) According to Chernyshov, until the SCO established a mechanism to accept new members, the GOR had no official position on the matter. "There is no point discussing Iran's possible membership because the majority of SCO member states are opposed," he said. He added the GOR would not force the issue because it believed the SCO was still a young organization and needed time to "find its way."

-----  
Ahmadinejad Told Not To Embarrass the SCO  
-----

14. (C) Chernyshov told us that, as an SCO observer state,

Iran would keep a low profile during the summit, with Ahmadinejad making a short statement after the SCO Heads of State speak. "He has been asked not to say anything that may damage the image of the SCO or any member state," Chernyshov said. Ahmadinejad will also not participate in the summit's closing press conference.

-----  
SCO Will Not Mention Manas Air Base  
-----

15. (C) Both MFA Third CIS Department Director Maksim Peshkov and Chernyshov told us that the SCO would not issue any statements regarding the Manas Air Base. "The SCO did not mention the air base at the 2006 and 2007 summits, and does not see a need to mention it this year," he stated. He added the SCO was interested in cooperating with the West and did not plan to issue any critical statements at the summit.

-----  
GOR Proposes SCO "Dialogue Partners"  
-----

16. (C) In an August 6 interview with the newspaper Vremya Novosti, DFM Borodavkin said that a mechanism would be established to allow states to become SCO "dialogue partners." Unlike observer states, Borodavkin said, these countries would be able to participate in certain SCO projects that interested them. Chernyshov said dialogue partners would not be considered any higher or lower than observer states; they would simply be able to participate in economic development projects and the like. Iran would be

eligible to apply for dialogue partner status. Chernyshov added that the GOR would also like to allow observer states to participate in SCO ministerial meetings in addition to summits. SCO members will sign a document establishing the dialogue partner program at the Dushanbe summit, but no consensus existed to allow observer states to join in ministerial meetings.

----- ---  
No Concrete Proposals For Afghanistan Assistance  
-----

17. (C) Chernyshov said the SCO would not announce any new projects to aid Afghanistan at Dushanbe. Instead, the SCO would simply issue a statement calling for the international community to help rebuild Afghanistan and fight the trafficking of narcotics from there. Chernyshov said the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group would most likely meet in Beijing prior to the Dushanbe summit, but he did not think any new projects would be agreed.

-----  
Russia to Chair SCO After Dushanbe  
-----

18. (C) Chernyshov told us Russia would host over 100 SCO meetings during its upcoming chairmanship of the organization, which will begin August 29. He added, however, that the GOR had not yet formulated any concrete plans or projects for the SCO to address.

RUBIN